

ON THE TYPOLOGY OF CLAUSES IN PAPIAMENTU

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1 Introduction

In Papiamentu (Pp), we find a class of complementizer-less complement clauses which appears to behave inconsistently with regards to characteristics which relate to finiteness: the (un)acceptability of the finite complementizer *ku* ‘that’, reflexive binding, tense/aspect marking, and quantifier scope at times suggest finiteness, and at others suggest non-finiteness. We argue that these contradictions can be resolved by a differentiated typology of clauses, as is made possible by the theory of functional projections. In particular, we argue that direct perception complements, marked with durative *ta*, are gerundial in character, and should be analysed as reduced Aspect Phrases rather than full clauses.

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2 Background

Van Putte & García (1990, henceforth VP&G), pursuing work by Van Putte (1985) on Pp complements and by Garcia & Van Putte (1989) on phonologically null forms, argue that the presence or absence of the complementizer *ku* ‘that’ in Pp has a signalling function. This conclusion is based on contrasts such as those in (1)-(2): the clausal complement in (1) is interpreted as describing an event deduced rather than directly perceived by the subject of *mira* ‘to see,’ whereas that in (2) is perceived by the matrix subject.¹

- (1) ... *el a mira [ku Nanzi a nèk e]*
... 3SG PERF see COMP Anancy PERF fool 3SG
‘... he saw [= understood] that Anancy had fooled him.’ (VP&G 1990: 199)
- (2) ... *el a mira [e wardadó di baka ta bini]*
... 3SG PERF see DEF guard of cow ASP come
‘... he saw the cowherder coming’ (VP&G, 1990: 199)

¹ Where relevant, examples have been adapted to the orthography described in Joubert (2002) and provided with free translations. Morpheme glosses throughout this paper are our own. The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: ASP = aspect marker, BE = copula, COMP = complementizer, DEF = definite article, IND = indefinite article, IRR = irrealis mood, LOC = locative preposition, NEG = negator, PERF = perfective aspect, PL = plural, POSS = possessive (pronoun), SG = singular, TNS = tense marker. Unattributed examples are drawn from our own fieldwork notes. Preverbal *ta* is glossed TNS in finite contexts, ASP in gerundials. The basis for this distinction is addressed in this paper.

Contrasts of this type led VP&G to claim that “the choice between KU and NULL is not arbitrary but motivated by the speaker’s view on the relation between the events in the complementizing² and complement clause: NULL corresponds with a view of closely related events while KU parallels the view of conceptual distance” (1990: 210). This parallels the observation of Kouwenberg & Lefebvre (2007: 41) that “perception verbs occurring with *ku* are not interpreted as verbs of direct perception but rather as verbs of indirect perception, thus, as propositional verbs.”

However, the absence of *ku* is not always associated with the same semantic effect.³ The following examples both contain a complement clause, bracketed for convenience. In (3), that clause is introduced by complementizer *ku* ‘that’, whereas it lacks an overt complementizer in (4). Here, the presence or absence of *ku* has no discernible semantic effect. Maurer (1988: 161), on the basis of these and similar data, suggests that *ku* is optional under conditions which remain to be ascertained. This is further supported by the list of verbs in VP&G (1990:193f) which are attested in literary production with clausal complements with or without *ku*.

- (3) *M’a bisa-bo [ku mi ’n ta keda kas]*
 1SG-PERF tell-2SG COMP 1SG NEG TNS remain house
 ‘I’ve told you that I won’t stay at home.’ (Maurer, 1988: 161)
- (4) *M’a bisa-bo [mi so n’ta keda kas awe]*
 1SG-PERF tell-2SG 1SG alone NEG-TNS remain house today
 ‘I’ve told you I won’t stay at home alone today.’ (Maurer, 1988: 161)

² The term “complementizing clause” in VP&G’s work refers to the matrix clause, which contains the verb which selects the complement clause.

³ VP&G also suggest that there is one single *ku*, a general linking morpheme, which serves both as a complementizer and preposition. In our perspective, that suggestion is mistaken. Notice the contrast between the form of the sequence *ku* + 3SG *e* in (i) and (ii):

- (i) a. *Mi ta hunga kuné.*
 1SG ASP play with-3SG
 ‘I am playing with her/him.’
 b. *Mi por kana mas lihe kuné.*
 1SG can walk more fast than-3SG
 ‘I can walk faster than her/him.’
- (ii) a. *Mi por kana mas lihe ku e ta bula.*
 1SG can walk more fast than 3SG ASP fly
 ‘I can walk faster than s/he flies.’
 b. *Mi no a bisa ku e lo bini.*
 1SG NEG PERF say COMP 3SG IRR come
 ‘I didn’t say that s/he will come.’

(i) shows that *ku* triggers liaison with the 3SG pronoun *e* when that pronoun has the status of a simple pronominal complement, resulting in *kuné* rather than **ku e*. This is independent of etymological origin: the *ku* in (ia) is a reflex of Portuguese/Spanish *con* ‘with,’ while the *ku* in (ib) is a reflexive of *que* ‘than, that.’ Neither the *ku* in comparative clauses (e.g. (iia)) nor the one in declarative complements (e.g. (iib)) trigger liaison. This suggests that *ku* in (i) does not have the same status as *ku* in (ii).

VP&G's analysis is based on the assumption that there are two main types of complement clauses in Papiamentu: paratactic complements (without a complementizer) and *ku* complements (disregarding complements marked by *di* and *pa*; see Kouwenberg & Lefebvre (2007) for a discussion of these). This means that they are unable to account for the fact that, despite the formal similarity, (3)-(4) do not contrast in the same way semantically as (1)-(2).

We will argue that there is a class of complementizer-less perception complements in Pp that superficially resembles, but is not identical with, that of finite complements that optionally occur without a complementizer. VP&G's claim is actually based on the initially confusing characteristics of these perception complements, which resemble finite complements in some respects. These characteristics also led Bickerton (1981: 100) astray, when he surmised that creoles originally only had finite complements, on the basis of sentences from Guyanese Creole English such as (5), which contains a pre-verbal aspect particle:

- (5) *Mi hia [drom a nak]*
 1SG hear drum ASP beat
 'I heard drums beating.' (Bickerton, 1981: 100)

Bickerton (1981: 103) cites similar examples from other creole languages, including Belizean, Haitian, Guyanais, and Sao Tomense. Precisely this type of example is present in Pp as well.

We argue that direct perception complements such as in (2) – and also in (5) – are not finite, in contrast with indirect perception complements such as in (1). Whereas the absence of *ku* in (4) is explained by its optionality in the finite complement clause of *bisa* 'to tell', its absence in (2) is a direct result of the reduced status of the embedded clause.⁴ In the following sections, we will survey the differences in properties of the *ku*-less direct perception complement clauses as opposed to the optionally *ku*-less clauses in (3)-(4).

We will consider, in turn, the appearance of subject anaphors in the embedded clause, encliticisation of the embedded subject pronoun on the preceding matrix verb, the wide or narrow scope interpretation of embedded quantifiers, and the acceptability of tense, mood and aspect marking. We will see that *ta* – the only preverbal marker which is acceptable in direct perception complements – has a durative interpretation in that context. This is different from *ta* as it appears in finite contexts, which lacks an aspectual interpretation. Finally, we will briefly consider other types of reduced complement clauses, including causative complements and small clauses.

⁴ Incidentally, this also accounts for some of the seemingly contradictory facts which led Mufwene and Dijkhoff (1989) to claim that Pp – and creole languages more generally – lack a finite/non-finite distinction as we encounter it in the familiar European languages.

3 Subject anaphors

Complement clauses with optional *ku* have the properties of full clauses. Among others, this means that these clauses constitute binding domains. For instance, it happens to be the case that the matrix subject and the embedded subject are co-referential in examples (3)-(4); the appearance of the pronoun *mi* in the embedded clause shows that clause to be an independent domain for binding (see Muysken, 1993 for a discussion of binding phenomena in Papiamentu). Indirect perception complement clauses are also full, finite clauses, hence, also have independently referring subjects. In contrast, direct perception complements are not. Thus, where the embedded subject of a direct perception clause is co-referential with the matrix subject, reflexive *mes* ‘self’ is required, as in (6), showing that the embedded clause does not constitute a binding domain. Indirect perception complements do not allow *mes* anaphors in subject position, as is seen in (7):

- (6) *Mi ta tende [*mi / mi mes (ta) kanta na radio]*
1SG TNS hear 1SG / 1SG self (ASP) sing LOC radio
‘I hear *me / myself sing(ing) on the radio.’
- (7) *Mi ta tende [ku mi (*mes) ta kanta na radio]*
1SG TNS hear COMP 1SG (*self) TNS sing LOC radio
‘I hear that I / *myself am singing on the radio.’

4 Syntactically conditioned encliticisation

The transparency effect seen in (6), which indicates the reduced status of direct perception complements, is further supported by encliticisation facts. Encliticisation normally affects an unmodified singular object pronoun, incorporating it with the preceding verb into a single phonological word. Kouwenberg & Muysken (1995) and Kouwenberg (2007a) note that simple adjacency is not sufficient to trigger encliticisation: there must be a case-marking relationship.

Maurer (1988: 267) shows that where the embedded subject of a direct perception complement takes the form of an unmodified singular pronoun, encliticisation on the preceding matrix verb is obligatory. Hence the acceptability of (8a), where the sequence *tende-bo* forms a single phonological word, and the unacceptability of (8b), where the verb and pronoun form separate phonological words. Thus, the prosodic behavior of the embedded subject pronoun in a direct perception complement is indicative of a case-marking relationship between the verb and the pronoun: this configuration involves Exceptional Case-Marking.

- (8) a. *M'a tende-bo ta kanta*
 1SG-PERF hear-2SG ASP sing
 'I heard you singing'
- b. **M'a tende bo ta kanta*
 1SG-PERF hear 2SG ASP sing (Maurer, 1988: 267)

In contrast, encliticisation fails where the pronoun is the subject of a finite clause. Consider (9a), which contains an embedded clause which is optionally introduced by *ku*. In (9b), the absence of *ku* creates string-adjacency between the embedded subject pronoun *mi* and the matrix verb *korda* 'to remember'. Nevertheless, encliticisation fails, showing that the embedded subject pronoun is case-marked by INFL:

- (9) a. *Korda ku mi ta spera-bo asina ku ...*
 remember COMP1SG TNS await-2SG manner COMP ...
 'Remember that I am expecting you as soon as ...'
- b. **Korda-mi ta spera-bo ...* (Kouwenberg, 2007a: 216)

The preceding observations are supported also by the distribution of the enclitic form *bu* of the 2SG pronoun (which is *bo* otherwise), which exists in the variety of Curaçao and Bonaire, but not of that of Aruba. The Curaçao Pp examples below contain the enclitic form in the direct object position of *mira* 'to see' in (10), and in the subject position of the direct perception complement following *mira* in (11). Again, the selection of the enclitic form is dependent on the case-marking relationship with the preceding verb, and indicates the reduced status of the clause that contains it.

- (10) *Mi ta mira-bu.*
 1SG TNS see-2SG
 'I am seeing you.' / 'I am looking at you.'
- (11) *Mi ta mira-bu ta sali.*
 1SG TNS see-2SG ASP leave
 'I see you leaving.'

5 Quantifier scope

Consider the contrast between the interpretation of the indefinite quantifier *niun* 'no one' in the direct and indirect perception complements in (12) and (13), respectively. The quantifier in (13) has wide scope. In contrast, the quantifier in (13) has narrow scope, i.e., its scope is limited to the embedded clause in which it is contained.

- (12) *Mi ta mira* [*niun hende ta sali*]
 1SG TNS see no.one person ASP leave
 ‘I see no one leaving.’ (i.e., there is no one such that I see that person leaving.)
- (13) *Mi ta mira* [*ku niun hende ta sali*]
 1SG TNS see COMP no.one person TNS leave
 ‘I see that no one is leaving.’ (i.e., I see that there is no one such that that person is leaving.)

Narrow scope is what is expected of finite clauses, which constitute independent domains at LF. In other words, the indirect perception complement in (13) behaves as a finite clause, but the direct perception complement in (12) does not. This contrast suggests that the direct perception complement is not finite, and that the presence of *ta* in it is not a signal of tense. We return to the status of *ta* below, where we argue that *ta* in direct perception complements is a gerundial marker, different from *ta* in finite contexts, including indirect perception complements such as that in (13).

6 Preverbal tense, mood, aspect

Direct perception complements do not allow the full range of tense, mood and aspect markers (14), while indirect perception complements do (15) – like other finite *ku*-clauses, indirect perception complements may disagree with the main clause in its tense reference (Kouwenberg & Murray, 1994: 45).

- (14) **Mi ta tende* [*Maria tabata / lo / a kanta na radio*]
 1SG TNS hear Mary TNS / IRR/ PERF sing LOC radio
- (15) *Mi ta tende* [*ku Maria tabata / lo / a kanta na radio*]
 1SG TNS hear COMP Mary TNS / IRR/ PERF sing LOC radio
 ‘I hear that Mary sang/will sing/has sung on the radio.’

Although direct perception complements do not accept preverbal *tabata*, *lo*, or *a*, we find preverbal *ta* in direct perception complements. Recall (6), repeated here, which is acceptable with *ta* in the embedded clause as well as without. Different from what is seen in (15), the presence or absence of *ta* in (16) does not signal a difference in the tense reference of the embedded clause:

- (16) *Mi ta tende* [*mi mes (ta) kanta na radio*]
 1SG TNS hear 1SG self (ASP) sing LOC radio
 ‘I hear myself sing(ing) on the radio.’

Although informants find it difficult to differentiate the meanings of (16) with and without *ta* in the embedded clause, their intuitions point to the fact that duration is

explicitly focussed on where *ta* is present, and not where it is absent (without implying that there is no duration involved there; cf. Maurer, 1988: 267f).

With telic verbs, the absence of *ta* implies that the completion of the act is witnessed, according to Maurer (1988: 267, citing unpublished work by Muller); the presence of *ta* once again suggests durativity. Consider the contrast in (17):

- (17) a. *M'a mir'é kap e palu.*
 1SG-PERF see-3SG cut DEF tree
 'I saw him cut the tree (including the moment the tree fell down).'
- b. *M'a miré ta kap e palu.*
 1SG-PERF see-3SG ASP cut DEF tree
 'I saw him cutting the tree (but not necessarily also the final result of the act of cutting).' (Maurer, 1988: 267)

7 Aspectual *ta* and tense *ta*

The intuitions of Papiamentu speakers about the interpretation of direct perception complements containing *ta* suggest that *ta* functions as a kind of gerundial aspect marker in those contexts. Note that it occurs also in adverbial gerundial clauses (18), in the complement of resultative *bini* 'come' (19), and in gerundial relatives (20); in each case, it is clearly associated with an explicitly durative interpretation:

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- (18) *Dios sa ni kuantu aña nan tin [ta kana tre'i dòkter.]*
 God know not.even how.many year 3PL have ASP walk after-of doctor
 'God only knows how many years they have spent running after doctors.'
 (Andersen 1990:73)
- (19) *El a bin [ta trata nan malu]*
 3SG PERF come ASP treat 3PL bad
 'He started treating them badly.' (Andersen, 1990)
- (20) *... e plantashi ta yen di hende [ta kòrta i piki tabaku]*
 DEF plantation BE full of person ASP cut and collect tobacco
 '... the plantation was full of people cutting and collecting tobacco.'
 (Maurer, 1988: 264)

Maurer (1988: 268) cites examples from work by Muller showing that this aspectual *ta* cannot be directly identified with the *ta* we find in main clauses. In the latter, *ta* is obligatory in the present tense with all verbs except a subset of stative verbs, as illustrated in (21). Moreover, where *ta* occurs in main clauses with a durative interpretation, the durative interpretation is associated with adverbial modifiers rather than with *ta* itself, as seen in (22) (see also Kouwenberg, 2007b: 310):

- (21) a. *Nan ta kere den Dios.*
 3PL TNS believe in God
 ‘They believe in God.’
 b. **Nan kere den Dios.*
 3PL believe in God
 (Maurer, 1988: 81)
- (22) *Wan ta kanta / awor-akí / tur dia / otro luna.*
 Wan TNS sing / now-here / every day / next month
 ‘Wan sings / is singing right now / sings every day / will sing next month.’
 (after Maurer, 1988b: 82)

With punctual verbs, which do not admit a durative reading, we find *ta* in main clauses simply because it is required in present tense contexts, as in (23). In contrast, *ta* is unacceptable with punctual verbs in direct perception complements, where its presence would entail a durative interpretation (24):

- (23) *Oti ta sende radio.*
 Oti TNS turn.on radio
 ‘Oti turns on the radio.’
- (24) *Mi a tende [Oti (*ta) sende radio]*
 1SG PERF hear Oti (*ASP) turn.on radio
 ‘I heard Oti turn on the radio.’ (Maurer, 1988: 268)

In short, *ta* in direct perception complements and other gerundial contexts has an aspectual, durative interpretation, whereas in finite contexts, *ta* functions as a tense marker, and lacks an inherent durative interpretation. Throughout this paper, we have glossed occurrences of aspectual *ta* as ASP, occurrences of the grammatically required *ta* as TNS, in recognition of this distinction. (See Kouwenberg & Lefebvre, 2007 for further elaboration.)

We conclude that gerundial clauses are Aspect Phrases, i.e., that they do not project Tense. This accounts for the transparency effects noted earlier, when we considered anaphoric subjects, encliticisation and quantifier scope – properties which suggest that the embedded subject behaves as a matrix object.

8 Conclusion

The conclusion drawn by VP&G (1990) that perception clauses come in two types, null direct perception and *ku* indirect perception clauses, is warranted, as we have shown in some detail. However, the presence or absence of *ku* is only one of the distinctions between them. We have seen that direct perception complements contrast with indirect perception complements - and other finite clauses - with respect to binding, quantifier

scope, acceptability of TMA marking, and the interpretation of preverbal *ta*, as summarized here:

Table 1 The properties of complement clauses of perception verbs

	narrow scope of quantifier	full TMA	Aspectual <i>ta</i> (i.e., Durative)	subject anaphor pronoun + <i>mes</i> ‘self’	syntactic status of complement clause
finite complement clauses (including indirect perception complements)	+	+	-	-	CP
direct perception complements	-	-	+	+	AspP

As indicated in table 1, indirect perception complements have the properties of full, finite clauses, whose properties are independent of the matrix clause. Hence, the full array of tense, mood and aspect markers may appear, including the aspectually neutral preverbal *ta*, and the clause constitutes an independent domain for binding and quantifier scope. Direct perception complements, on the other hand, are complementizer-less, are transparent for binding and quantifier scope, and are non-finite; only gerundial *ta* is acceptable in this context. We account for this contrast by assigning to indirect perception complements the syntactic status of a CP, to direct perception complements that of an Asp(ect)P. Thus, an indirect perception complement such as that in (1) has the structure of (1)'; a direct perception complement such as that in (2) has the structure of (2)':⁵

- (1)' ... *el a mira* [_{CP} *ku* [_{TP} *Nanzi_i* [_{PerfP} *a* [_{VP} *t_i nèk e*]]]]
 ... 3SG PERF see COMP Anancy PERF fool 3SG
 ‘... he saw [= understood] that Anancy had fooled him.’ (VP&G 1990:199)
- (2)' ... *el a mira* [_{AspP} [*e wardadó di baka*]_i *ta* [_{VP} *t_i bini*]]
 ... 3SG PERF see DEF guard of cow ASP come
 ‘... he saw the cowherder coming’ (VP&G 1990:199)

⁵ This also accounts for the unacceptability of independent negation in direct perception complements (and other gerundials) – a characteristic not discussed here. Additionally, we predict the unacceptability of constructions which contain an empty *pro* subject (certain weather predicates, raising constructions, etc.; see Kouwenberg 1990, Kouwenberg & Scott 2010).

We have argued that the aspectual (durative) *ta* which appears in gerundials cannot be identified with *ta* as it appears in finite contexts. The wider implication of this is that the presence of durative aspect particles is not a sign of finiteness per se. This is true of Pp, but it holds for other creole languages as well. In short, in addition to the familiar distinction between finite and infinitival complements, the facts surveyed here point to the existence of a class of gerundial clauses, which appear as direct perception complements as well as in a variety of other contexts.

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